

## CLAIMS

- 1 1. A method for scheduling the distribution of content utilizing a network,  
2 comprising the steps of:
  - 3 (a) accessing content in a database;
  - 4 (b) generating schedule data by inputting preferences to a scheduling  
5 algorithm , the scheduling algorithm being based on predetermined methods of  
6 processing input preferences relating to parameters selected from the group consisting  
7 of: frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events, and category filtering; and  
8 (c) distributing the content and the schedule data to a plurality of output  
9 devices utilizing a network.
- 1 2. A method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising the step of causing the  
2 output devices to communicate the content to an audience.
- 1 3. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of  
2 a visual display.
- 1 4. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of  
2 electronic broadcast.
- 1 5. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of  
2 audio/visual broadcast.
- 1 6. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content communication is by way of  
2 audio/visual display.
- 1 7. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input frequency preference relates to  
2 a relative weight associated with each content, and wherein the processing of input  
3 preferences includes:
  - 4 assigning a weight to the schedule data associated with each content,
  - 5 Whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices communicate the  
6 content preferentially according to the assigned weight.

1 8. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input interval preference relates to a  
2 recurring period associated with a play of the content and wherein the processing of  
3 input preferences includes:

4 assigning a recurring period to the schedule data associated with each content,  
5 whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause the content to be  
6 communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the input preference relating to the  
2 interval includes an offset which delays communication of the content following the  
3 beginning of the recurring period.

1 10. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the input time of play preference relates  
2 to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences includes:

3 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with each  
4 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the  
5 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 11. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the trigger events preference relates to  
2 the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, wherein the processing of input  
3 preferences includes:

4 assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated  
5 with the content, whereby under control of the schedule data, the output devices  
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

1 12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the event to be recognized includes an  
2 asynchronous request.

1 13. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the content includes a tag associated  
2 therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for communication.

1 14. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the tag indicates whether or not the  
2 content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.

1 15. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the tag indicates whether or not the  
2 content is available for communication to a particular audience during a specified period  
3 of time.

1 16. An apparatus for scheduling the distribution of content to a plurality of output  
2 devices utilizing a network, comprising:  
3 (a) means for accessing content in a database;  
4 (b) means for generating schedule data in response to the input of  
5 preferences to a scheduling algorithm, the scheduling algorithm being based on  
6 predetermined methods of processing input preferences relating to parameters selected  
7 from the group consisting of frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events, and  
8 category filtering; and  
9 (c) means for distributing the content and the schedule data to a plurality of  
10 output devices utilizing a network.

1 17. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, and further comprising:  
2 a plurality of output devices; and  
3 means for causing each output device to communicate the content to an  
4 audience.

1 18. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output  
2 devices are visual display devices and the content communication is by way of visual  
3 display.

1 19. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output  
2 devices are electronic transmitters and the content communication is by way of  
3 electronic broadcast.

1 20. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein at least some of said output  
2 devices are transmitters and the content communication is by way of audio/visual  
3 broadcast.

1 21. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, at least some of said output devices are  
2 display devices and wherein the content communication is by way of audio/visual  
3 display.

1 22. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input frequency preference  
2 relates to a weight associated with each content and wherein the processing of input  
3 preferences includes:

4 assigning a weight to the schedule data associated with the content, wherein in  
5 response to the schedule data the output devices communicate the content  
6 preferentially according to the assigned weight.

1 23. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input interval preference relates  
2 to a recurring period associated with a particular content, and wherein the processing of  
3 input preferences includes:

4 assigning the recurring period to the schedule data associated with the  
5 particular content, whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause  
6 the content to be communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 24. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input preferences relating to  
2 the interval include an offset which delays communication of the content following the  
3 beginning of the recurring period.

1 25. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the input time of play preference  
2 relates to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences includes:

3 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with the  
4 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the  
5 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 26. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the trigger events preference  
2 relates to the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, and wherein the  
3 processing of input preferences includes:

4 assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated  
5 with the content, whereby under control of the schedule data, the output devices  
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

1 27. An apparatus as recited in claim 26, wherein the external event to be recognized  
2 includes an asynchronous request.

1 28. An apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the content includes a tag  
2 associated therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for  
3 communication.

1 29. An apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein the tag indicates whether or not the  
2 content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.

1 30. An apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein the tag indicates whether or not the  
2 content is available for communication to an audience during a specified period of time.

1 31. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for scheduling  
2 the distribution of content to a plurality of output devices utilizing a network, comprising:  
3 (a) a code segment that accesses content in a database;  
4 (b) a code segment including a scheduling algorithm that generates schedule  
5 data in response to input preferences, the scheduling algorithm being based on  
6 predetermined methods of processing input preferences relating to parameters selected  
7 from the group consisting of: frequency, interval, time of play, trigger events, and  
8 category filtering; and  
9 (c) a code segment that causes distribution of the content and the schedule  
10 data to a plurality of output devices utilizing a network.

1 32. A computer program as recited in claim 31, and further comprising a code  
2 segment that causes the output devices to communicate the content to an audience.

1 33. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication  
2 is by way of a visual display.

1 34. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication  
2 is by way of electronic broadcast.

1 35. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication  
2 is by way of audio/visual broadcast.

1 36. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content communication  
2 is by way of audio/visual display.

1 37. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the input frequency  
2 preference relates to a weight of each content relative to other content and wherein the  
3 processing of input preferences includes a code segment for assigning a weight to the  
4 schedule data associated with the content, whereby in response to the schedule data  
5 the output devices are caused communicate the content preferentially according to the  
6 assigned weight.

1 38. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the input interval preference  
2 relates to a recurring period associated with communication of the content, and  
3 wherein the processing of input preferences includes:  
4 assigning a recurring period to the schedule data associated with the content,  
5 whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices cause the content to be  
6 communicated at the beginning of the recurring period.

1 39. A computer program as recited in claim 38, wherein the input preferences  
2 relating to the interval include an offset which delays communication of the content  
3 following the beginning of the recurring period.

1 40. A computer program as recited in claim \_\_\_, wherein the input time of play  
2 preference relates to a time of day, and wherein the processing of input preferences  
3 includes:  
4 assigning a particular time of day to the schedule data associated with each  
5 content, whereby in response to the schedule data, the output devices cause the  
6 content to be communicated at the particular time of day.

1 41. A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the trigger events  
2 preference relates to the occurrence of an event external to the algorithm, and wherein  
3 the processing of input preferences includes:

4            assigning an external event to be recognized to the schedule data associated  
5 with the content, whereby in response to the schedule data the output devices  
6 communicate the content upon occurrence of the external event.

1    42.    A computer program as recited in claim 41, wherein the external event includes  
2 an asynchronous request.

1    43.    A computer program as recited in claim 32, wherein the content includes a tag  
2 associated therewith, the tag indicating whether or not the content is available for a  
3 communication.

1    44.    A computer program as recited in claim 43, wherein the tag indicates whether or  
2 not the content is available for communication to an audience in a specified venue.

1    45.    A computer program as recited in claim 43, wherein the tag indicates whether or  
2 not the content is available for [communication to an audience during a specified period  
3 of time.